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Thesis

PAUL'S BREAK WITH JUDAISM

Submitted by

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(Ph. B., Denison University, 1925)

In partial fulfillment of requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

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Introduction

Paul's break with Judaism was a very vital crisis in the history of Christianity and one which had far-reaching effects. Even we of today must pay homage to Paul for his tremendous part in freeing Christianity from the bounds of Judaism with its prejudices, its narrowness, and its legality and taking it to the freedom of the Gentiles whereby we of today may share. If Paul had not done it, in the Providence of God someone else undoubtedly would have done it, but under the circumstances we turn to Paul with admiration, gratitude, and intense interest.

Paul's break was a two-fold one. First he severed his connections with Orthodox Judaism to which he had been wholly devoted and became a Christian with such a zeal and keen insight that he could not contain himself within the bounds of Judaistic Christianity. Hence his second great alienation occurred and he found himself not only outside of Judaism but also outside of Judaistic Christianity.

This thesis endeavors to set forth the causes which led Paul to separate himself from Judaism and its attendant beliefs and practices and to make clear the manifold results which proceeded from that separation.



It also attempts to explain the causes which brought about his severed relations with his Judaistic Christian brothers and to set forth the extremely vital and eternal results which have issued from it to this day.

Orthodox Judaism

A. Nature of Orthodox Judaism

1. Hebrews and Hellenists

The Jews at the time of Paul were living in all parts of the then known world. In fact the majority of them were living outside of Palestine and constituted what was known as the dispersion. Some of these people had been deported in masses to Assyria, Babylonia, and Rome; others had gone to the foreign country of their own volition. Frequently the rights of citizenship and other privileges had been offered to them if they would go and settle in newly founded towns. Attracted by this and because of adverse conditions at home many of them had left Palestine. The Jewish dispersion is frequently divided and called the Eastern Dispersion and the Western or Hellenist Dispersion. The Eastern group included the Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and the people of Mesopotamia. The Western group included those in Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. The latter group were called Greeks or Grecians or more frequently Hellenists. The former were called Hebrews from the language which they spoke.

Language, however, was not the only distinction

between the Hebrews and Hellenists. Pharisaism, with its idea of legal purity, declared the Greek far inferior to the Babylonian. The country of Babylonia was considered as a part of Israel because it was supposed to have belonged to the territory which King David conquered. When permission was given for the Jews to return to Palestine only a minority of those in Babylonia did return. The wealthiest and most influential Jews remained in Babylon. In some respects the Babylonian dispersion was placed on a higher level than Palestine itself as they considered themselves of purer descent than the Palestinian people. Also Ezra was a Babylonian and through him Babylonia made a great contribution to Israel which made Israel forever the debtors to Babylonia. Palestine was also indebted to Babylonia for the development of its theology: the Halakhah, the interpretation of the Law, and the Haggadah or personal sayings of the Great Teachers were developed in Babylonia under Hillel and Eleazer, the Mede.

This Eastern Dispersion constituted the chief strength of the Jewish nation and held the future of its religion in its hand. It was so intensely Hebrew that the people were vitally interested in the study of their theology until the theological academies of

Babylonia overshadowed those of Palestine. When the Law had been neglected for a long time Ezra restored it; the second time Hillel rescued it and the third time Rabbi Chija, another Babylonian, restored it.

They held the highest contempt for Gentiles and abhorred everything connected with idolatry and non-Jewish practices. They refused to let themselves be influenced by their surroundings and soon Laws arose in order to keep the Jews separate from the Gentiles and to keep them clean. Their attitude toward them was really one of bitter hatred. The Scribes and the Pharisees are a product of the dispersion and the people themselves were held in the sway of traditionalism. Their thought and life was taken up with the study of the Law written and oral. They believed themselves to be God's chosen people and that they alone would receive His blessings.

The Western Dispersion is very different from the Eastern Dispersion. "With the Eastern Dispersion rested the future of Judaism; with the Western, that of the world. The one represented old Israel groping back into the darkness of the past; the other young Israel stretching forth its hands to where the dawn of a new day was about to break!"¹

1. Eidersheim: Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, p.17

Living within the bounds of Greek culture it was impossible that they should not be influenced by it and so we find the Hellenists different from the Hebrews in many ways and we also find many of the Gentiles being influenced by Judaism. The Jews or Hellenists, as they were called, had occupations which forced them to settle in one place for just a short time and thus they could not become united into a people as the Eastern Jews were. The very atmosphere of the East compelled the Jews to follow the Rabbis; in the West it tended to make them follow the Greek thought and ways. These Hellenists, notwithstanding their surroundings, were loyal Jews and loved their synagogues and their worship. Regardless of how much they adopted the Greek language and failed to observe the Law, they were Jews and felt themselves to be in harmony with the Pharisees. The synagogue worship was an important element in keeping the Jews, loyal Jews.

In regard to their study of the Scriptures, Hellenistic influences can be seen. In the Eastern Dispersion the letter of the law was studied but the Hellenist, with the Greek philosophy and mode of thought behind him, made an intellectual study and plunged into the real spiritual meaning of the law and searched for the truth embodied in the letter of the law. Soon

after this came the Greek translation of the Old Testament, which was accessible to the great majority of the people and which really marked the beginning of Hellenism.

Alike were Hebrews and Hellenists in their love for Jerusalem and the Temple. Every Jew, wherever he was, turned his face toward Jerusalem in his hour of worship and from every synagogue an annual temple-tribute was sent to Jerusalem. But more important than this in binding together Hebrew and Hellenist was their "common hope." They looked forward to the time when the Messiah would come and the kingdom of Israel would be restored in Palestine to the extent promised to Abraham. Philo says that however low the condition of Israel might be or however scattered the people to the ends of the earth, the banished would, on a given sign, be set free in one day. They believed that at any moment the Messiah would come and then would come that glorious day when the Dispersions would be no more.

A. 2. Religious Parties

(a) The Scribes

During the second century B.C. the Pharisees and Sadducees made their first appearance as distinct parties but they represented tendencies which can be traced back as far as Ezra. Ezra lived at a most critical time in Israel's history and to him Israel owed the salvation of her religion. Ezra had two main ideas which he put before the people: the first was the absolute separation of Jew and Gentile; the second was the faithful living of every Jew in conformity with the Torah, the divine guide given to Israel. Ezra was called a Sopher or Scribe and the period after him is called the period of Sopherim. The Scribes collectively were called "The Great Synagogue."

"In the time of Jesus Jewish piety was largely legalistic and formal. The whole life of a pious Jew was strictly regulated by the Law. The Law was God's greatest gift to Israel; it was the complete revelation of His will and the basis of the covenant into which He had entered with them at Sinai; in it God had made known the perfect way of life, binding Himself by its terms to reward both in time and eternity the pious Jew in proportion to his observance of its precepts. The Law was, therefore, the binding norm both of the religious and moral life. Religion was

not a communion of man with God, but a legally correct walk before the Lord."¹

This legalistic tendency called into being a group of people who should make the law their first concern and who should interpret it to the people. They were called Sopherim or Scribes, as Ezra had been called. The later Scribes were jurists but the earlier ones were copyists, editors, students, interpreters of Scripture and the Law. They gathered together and elaborated Israel's sacred literature and interpreted it to the common people. During the Maccabean period some of these Scribes became Pharisees and some became Sadducees.

The greatest part of their activity was in Judea but some were found wherever there were people zealous for the law. They usually were the ones to read the Scripture in the synagogues and to teach. They demanded honor especially from their pupils and required preference over the pupil's parents.

Their functions were threefold: - first, to theoretically develop the Law itself; second, to teach the Law to their pupils; and third, to act as judges in the Sanhedrin and local courts.

The pious Jew was required to observe the law in its minutest details but it was impossible to do

1. Hastings: Dictionary of the Bible, p. 421
"Scribes" - D. Eaton

so without guidance. So one of the chief functions of the Scribes was to study the law and to show how it could be lived in daily life. Cases were frequent when both the law and tradition were silent and the meeting of these difficulties was a leading occupation of the Scribes. They busied themselves in providing for every conceivable case that might occur and succeeded in making a hedge or fence around the Law by making it impossible for a person to break the Law if he kept all the rules. In theory the written Law was the more important but in practice the oral law was given precedence. They taught the people that Jehovah not only gave Moses the Torah but also its interpretation which was called Halakhah.¹

They laid greater stress on the ascetic than the ethical because through it they were kept separate from other peoples.² Their ideal seems to have been holiness, not righteousness. All these many laws and ascetic practices reduced their religion to external formalism. Life under the Law was burdensome indeed until even some of the Scribes began to devise methods whereby they could evade some of their own rules.

The second function of the Scribes was to teach

1. Hastings: Dictionary of the Bible, p. 421
"Scribes" - D. Eaton

2. Ibid. p. 422

the Law in order to raise up new disciples or Scribes. The students sat on the floor around their teacher and learned verbatim the rules of the Scribes. The students were required to learn and retain everything in their memory and then never to teach otherwise than they had been taught by their teachers.

Although they generally appeared with the Pharisees, Scribes and Pharisees were not one and the same. The Pharisees represented a religious party while the Scribes held a public office.

(b) The Pharisees

During the Maccabean period in the reign of John Hyrkanus (135-105 B.C.) the name Pharisee makes its first appearance. Those who came to hold that name were the ones who during the preceding years had been the loyal defendants of the Torah. John Hyrkanus was interested in extending his power by all possible means, so he took an active interest in the religious affairs of the Jewish people and set about to reform some of the abuses which had crept in during the reign of his predecessors.

The particular reform which had direct bearing on the study of Pharisaism was one dealing with the payment of tithes of the products of the soil as required by the Torah. John Hyrkanus appointed inspectors to see that it was done properly and there was formed a voluntary association of those who promised to completely obey the Torah in this respect and also the laws of clean and unclean. There were four classes of people as a result of this, in accordance with the rigidity of their practice and the Pherushim were the members of the first class. Pherushim, the Hebrew for Pharisee, means separated, and so the members of this class were those who were zealous for the Torah and who were the descendants of the Sopherim. The

term separatists might have been given to them by themselves because they kept as far as possible from all uncleanness and unclean persons. Or, it might have been given to them as a term of derision because they separated themselves so completely. A Pharisee avoided contact as far as was possible with a non-Pharisee.

The distinctive feature of Pharisaism was this separation from the people. Being unable to separate themselves entirely they made rules regulating their contacts with others so as to know what was unclean and what clean. As time went on the Pharisees called in more and more the aid of the unwritten tradition and it was here that the fundamental difference occurred between them and the Sadducees.

It is difficult to prove an exact date when the Pharisees and Sadducees began as separate parties, but it is far easier to point out when they openly separated from each other, which time has been placed near the end of the reign of John Hyrkanus. At the beginning of his reign he was in harmony with the Pharisees but on account of a breach with them he left them and went to the Sadducees. From this time on the two parties became separate and distinct - the one a non-political party whose chief concern was for religion

and the other party interested in both religion and politics. The stress which the Pharisees laid upon religion won the majority of the people to their side. So later when Alexandra became ruler she gladly gave power to the Pharisees in order to be at peace with her people. John Hyrkanus had done away with the decrees of the Pharisees but now they were reinstated and all life was governed by the Torah and the rules of the Pharisees.

The Pharisees spared themselves nothing in observing the law and renounced all enjoyments of life. They believed that the ones who thus observed the law were the only true Israel and as they themselves were the only ones who did this, they were the only true Israel. In this absolute obedience the law of the Scribes was held as binding as the Torah.

The theology of the Pharisees may fall into two divisions, the Halakhah or Law and the Haggadah or free expressions of the Pharisees. The Halakhah was a means of showing the Jew how the teaching of the Torah was applicable in his case. It taught the right way of doing the will of God. The Halakhah was a means of ethical training which was progressive and not a rigid system. It taught that an outward act was worthless without a true inward purpose and has

had a lasting effect on the morality of the Jews. Pharisaism was a religion which put the doing of God's will first and faith took a second place.

The leading characteristic of the Pharisees was their scrupulous observance of the law, both oral and written. The words of the Sopherim were regarded as akin to the words of the Torah and were more beloved. The Pharisees were the strictly legal party among the Jews. Their very religion consisted in the knowledge and rigid observance of the law and tradition.

The Pharisees taught a future life of happiness for the righteous but eternal imprisonment for the wicked. This doctrine is the old Jewish belief, however, of retribution and resurrection and was held by most of the Jews with the exception of the Sadducees.

They had a system of merits and rewards. There is a distinction between the righteous and the sinner and the doctrine of reward sought to express this difference. There was a better condition in store for the man who did God's will than for the man who did not do it. The system of merit implied that something was added immediately to the character of the one who did the good deed.

They also taught and believed in the existence of angels, demons, and spirits, and their literature was filled with the presence of these.

They believed in Divine Providence, not taking the extreme view of the Essenes in that fate decides everything, nor the other extreme position of the Sadducees in that the individual has absolute freedom but they believed in a union of the two. Everything that happens takes place through God's Providence and that a cooperation with God in these things is possible. Man has moral responsibility and he brings upon himself punishment if he acts wrongly and merits and rewards if he acts rightly. They believed that God created man with two natures or impulses; the one for good and the other for bad. If a man died during a pestilence he did not die before his time but it was foreordained that such was to be his death.

God created the evil impulse in man but the Pharisee believed that a remedy was also given. Prayer, repentance, and good works through obedience to the Law helped to remedy this condition and thus to give man some part in the controls of his life.

The Pharisees had messianic expectations, which involved a literal reign of God upon the earth and this kingdom would be the kingdom of the saints and they themselves were the saints because they were the only ones who scrupulously kept the Law.

Though they were not a political party they were patriotic but it was a religious patriotism that they

had. They believed that the foreign rule was God's punishment for the people's sin and that it would continue until the Messiah should come.

The Pharisees were very active in their opposition toward Jesus. He claimed to forgive sins and associated with publicans and sinners, thus breaking their laws of clean and unclean. He was not careful to observe scores of the Orthodox laws and they felt that His whole life was in opposition to them and their position.

Jesus criticized them. The Law was the only and absolute means of attaining salvation for both individual and nation according to the Pharisees. Religion was thus made external and the relation between God and man was purely legal and not the fellowship that Jesus taught. Their zeal for the law was based entirely on the merit and reward which they hoped to obtain. Their righteousness became a mere formalism. Jesus criticised the externality of their religion. By their legal conception of religion they lost the values of religion and by their countless number of rules they turned obedience and service to God into heavy grievous burdens. It was this very externalism which failed to bring Paul the desired results and was one of the outstanding causes for his break with Judaism.

(c) The Sadducees

The Sadducees are very different from the Pharisees, not only in their doctrines, but also in their characteristics. They have been called aristocrats by Josephus, as they are the well-to-do and do not have the masses on their side as do the Pharisees. They are the spiritual descendants of the priestly party of Jerusalem which, toward the close of the Greek period of Israel's history, was eager to Hellenize the Jews. They were not greatly concerned when the Maccabees set up a state which was not different from the secular states around them, and they entered the service of the new rulers as soldiers and diplomats, and then formed the party called Zadokites or Sadducees. They probably received this name from Zadok, the priest whose family had charge of the priestly duties from the time of Solomon. A party which was composed of the aristocratic priestly party might easily be called Zadokitian or Sadducean. They did not oppose Greek customs as they were mainly a political party and their interest was in the Jewish state as an independent state.

The main opposition between the Pharisees and Sadducees was not a question of class, but an opposition of principles, of dispositions, and of theories of life. The Pharisees were intensely religious and

wanted to make everyone else religious. The Sadducees were largely indifferent to religion except as it was a matter of custom and their great interest was in the secular state. Their first opposition occurred in regard to politics, but later it centered on the Law, ritual, and doctrines.

The Sadducees refused to acknowledge as binding the oral law and rules of the Scribes and Pharisees. They acknowledged only the Torah as being binding and worthy of obedience. In many cases they agreed with these rules, but would not acknowledge them. In many incidents the Sadducees went beyond the Law and were more severe than the Pharisees. The difference between the two sects in this respect was not so much the principle involved as the living up to the principle. In regard to the Levitical Laws of uncleanness, the Sadducees were more scrupulous in obeying them than the Pharisees. They interpreted the Law itself very literally, while the Pharisees mitigated its severity and made countless numbers of rules to be obeyed in regard to cleanness of vessels used, purification of the priests, and burning of the animals. The Pharisees demanded that the daily sacrifice should be furnished by the Temple Treasury, but the Sadducees insisted that the free will offerings of the individual taking part in the sacrifice should be used.

The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection of the body, nor in any sort of personal continuity after death. In accord with this they denied future rewards and punishments and even went so far as to say that the soul perishes with the body. They also denied the existence of angels and spirits. The Sadducees in these respects represent the old standpoint, but we can not say that their motive for clinging to the old was their conservatism. Instead it was their political position which made their interests of this world and not intensively religious as the Pharisees. So we see it was lack of religious fervor rather than conservatism which made them cling to the old.

They differed very substantially from the Pharisees in regard to predestination, not believing in it at all. Man had absolute freedom to choose his course and because of such a belief they were not dependent on God. They claimed nothing from God and He claimed and received nothing from them. They were indifferent to religion except as a matter of custom and their main interest was the state. Man's choice for good or evil with its attendant results of misery or happiness depended entirely on his exercise of free will and self-determination.

The Sadducees are not frequently mentioned by name in the Gospels. It was toward the close of Jesus'

life that he came into open conflict with them. They had such a slight influence on the people that his criticisms were usually directed toward the Pharisees. In Matthew 16:6-11 Jesus, however, warned the people against the leaven of the Sadducees; meaning probably their secular spirit.¹ Jesus came into conflict with them when he cleansed the temple and drove out the money changers and finally we find the Sadducees joining the Pharisees in their opposition to Jesus. The Sadducees' greatest objection to Jesus was probably motivated by the fear that a Messianic movement, led by Jesus, would have disastrous results on their political life and secular state.

The Pharisees were the real possessors of power and the Sadducees, in order to win any cooperation from the people, had to frequently act in accord with Pharisaic principles. When Jerusalem was destroyed they speedily disappeared from history because their existence was bound up in the secular state and not in their religion.

1. Mark 8:15, Luke 12:1 refer however to the leaven of both the Sadducees and the Pharisees

A. 3. The Synagogue

(a) The School

As has been mentioned, in dealing with the Scribes and the Pharisees, the Law was the most important thing in all of Judaism. R. Chananiah ben Teradim said, "When two sit together and do not converse about the law they are an assembly of scorners, of which it is said: sit not in the seat of scorners." Gamaliel said, "Appoint for thyself a teacher, so wilt thou avoid what is doubtful." Hillel said, "An ignorant man cannot be truly pious."¹ Everywhere was the call to study the law and so schools were established for this purpose. Josephus says, "We take most pains of all with the instruction of children and esteem the observation of the laws and the piety corresponding with them the most important affair of our whole life. If anyone should question one of us concerning the laws, he would more easily repeat all than his whole name. Since we learn them from our first consciousness, we have them, as it were, engraven on our souls; and a transgression is rare, but the averting of punishment is impossible."²

The education in the law was the duty and task of the parents but there were also the synagogue schools

1. Schurer: Jewish People in the Time of Jesus, p. 44

2. Ibid., p. 47

erected for the instruction of the youth. In Jesus' lifetime Gamaliel issued the notice that a teacher should be appointed in every province and town and that all the children of six or seven years of age should be taken to them. In these schools reading was taught for the sole purpose of being able to read the law. The earliest instruction was in the reading and memorization of the law.

They believed not only in the theory but in the actual practice and so the children practiced the law. At the beginning they were not compelled to obey the laws in their entirety but gradually they were expected to so that when they reached the age of twelve, when they were bound to observe all the law, they were properly trained for it.

(b) The Synagogue

The synagogue itself was another means of instruction. In fact this was its main function and not public worship as we think of it. Josephus says, "Not once or twice or more frequently did our lawgiver command us to hear the law but to come together weekly with the cessation of other work, to hear the law and to learn it accurately."¹ Later Judaism regarded this as an essential element of its religious institutions.

The synagogues were usually built by the community but if this was impossible, the people would meet in a private dwelling. There were two rules to be obeyed in building a synagogue. The first was that a synagogue should not be built unless there were ten men who could devote their time to it, and the second was that worshippers should face the west as in the Temple at Jerusalem. The more strict ordinances of the Temple, such as not entering it with the shoes on, do not apply to the synagogue but the synagogue was regarded as being consecrated to God and was to be treated as such. Each Friday evening the Sabbath lamp was lighted and as the Sabbath morning came all hastened to the Synagogue. The chief parts of the service were

1. Shurer: The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus, p.54

the reading of the Shema, prayer, the reading of the Torah, the reading of the prophets, the blessing of the priest and the explanation of what had been read. Any competent member of the congregation could give the explanatory discourse.

(c) The Sanhedrin

The Scribes continued to function until Judea came under the control of the Greeks and Hellenism became a powerful influence. For reasons not known "The Great Synagogue" did not function in dealing with Hellenism and seemed to have disappeared. After a period of about eighty years an organization of the religious and political life of the Jewish people was formed and was known from an early date as the Sanhedrin. Almost from the beginning it is noticed that there were conflicting parties in the Sanhedrin; there were the Pharisees, the loyal defenders of the Torah, and there were the Sadducees.

The name Sanhedrin was given to the governing body of the Israelites in the second century B.C.

The Great Sanhedrin of Jerusalem consisted of seventy-one members who were called elders. The Little Sanhedrin of the provinces consisted of twenty-three members. According to one tradition, anyone who distinguished himself as a judge was advanced to be a member of first one and then the other smaller Sanhedrin and finally was chosen to be a member of the Great Sanhedrin. Another tradition, which undoubtedly refers to a later period, says that in front of the members were three rows in which sat the non-ordained scribes

and from these any vacancies were filled. Some of the qualifications of a member of the Sanhedrin, as given by Hastings, were that the member must be learned, humble, popular with his fellowmen, courageous, strong, of tall stature, advanced age, and have dignified bearing and he must be acquainted with foreign languages. Only those were admitted to the Sanhedrin who were of pure blood so as to be able to marry with the priestly families.

The Little Sanhedrin had the power to pronounce and execute capital punishment but the Great Sanhedrin was the only one with power to pronounce a verdict against a tribe, a prophet, or the high priest, to declare war, to appoint Sanhedrins over the tribes, to execute judgment against a city that had lapsed into idolatry.¹ The political, religious, and judicial administrations of the Israelites were in the hands of the Sanhedrin.

1. Hastings: Dictionary of the Apostolic Church, p. 456
"Sanhedrin", K. Kohler

A. 4. Legalistic Aspects of the Jewish Religion

Thus, as we have seen, the Law was the important factor in Jewish life and the emphasis made the people a people of the Law. The impulse which goaded them constantly was their belief in divine retribution. They believed that if a man was unusually faithful in obeying God's laws then God was obligated to reward him accordingly. Some of the reward might come during the life on earth, but full retribution would not be given until the life hereafter. As these impulses or motives were of an external nature, so were the results. A man's prayer life and worship were governed by external laws so that the real purpose of worship was entirely lost sight of and he was merely complying with rules. The religion of the Jew was fulfilling the Law.

As has been noticed already, the Scribes and Pharisees were not content with having the people obey the commandments but gave to them thousands of rules. The subject of Sabbath observance was one which was completely surrounded with rules and a religious Jew would seek to observe all of them. There were thirty-nine kinds of work which were forbidden on the Sabbath which included such things as making a knot, untying a knot, sewing two stitches, writing two letters, and

separating two threads. The people were so concerned with keeping all these rules that the real spirit of the law never meant much to them.

In order for every true Israelite to be reminded of his duties toward God, he wore three mementoes; first, the Zizith, which was tassels or fringes of blue or white wool which were worn at the four corners of his upper garment; second, the Mesusa, which was an oblong box, fixed to the house above the right hand door post, on which was written in twenty-two lines, Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 9:13-21; third, the Tephillin, or prayer straps, which were put on at morning prayer. There were two kinds of Tephillin; one for the arm and the other for the head. They were small, hollow parchment cases in which lay a small roll of parchment on which was written Exodus 13:11-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21. No true piety could live in such surroundings of externalism and juristic point of view. "Ethics and theology were swallowed up in jurisprudence."¹ The moral point of view was completely neglected in following the legal one and the effort of the people was expended in following the letter of the law even though its meaning was evaded. Nothing was left to the individual to decide; everything was placed under the bondage of the law and everywhere and everytime

1. Schurer: The Jewish People in the Time of Jesus, p.120

an Israelite did something, he would have to ask himself, "What is commanded?" Life was all external; it couldn't be the result of inward motive. The earnest man was continually disturbed, wondering whether he had fulfilled all the commandments. The learned man, the one who knew the law, was usually proud and conceited because, knowing the law, he could fulfill the letter of the law.

The Jews believed that God was the God of the Jews only, and of the Gentiles only so far as they came into the Jewish Synagogue. There was no hope for anyone outside of Judaism. Thus, Gentiles had to obey the Law in its entirety as the Jews did, or salvation could not come to them. Externalism, formality, legalism, and exclusiveness characterized the religion of Judaism.

B. Events Culminating in Paul's Break with Orthodox Judaism

1. Paul's Preparation for Rabbinical Work

Paul, the great prophet to the Gentiles, the one on whose teachings Christianity was built was born into this situation which was just the one to prepare him for his work.

He was born of Jewish parentage in the Hellenistic city of Tarsus of Cilicia.

Paul says, himself, that he was a "citizen of no mean city." Tarsus was an industrial center, a cosmopolitan city, and a great university was here. Tarsus was intellectually famous far and wide, surpassing even Athens or Alexandria. It was the seat of learning of its day. Paul's life in such a city undoubtedly had a great influence on him. He came in contact with all kinds of peoples, and as a result he increased in knowledge of the ways of mankind and the world, and understood men. He lived close to life, knowing the lowest and also the best.

Paul inherited the rights of Roman citizenship and of this he was very proud. Roman citizenship could be bought in Paul's day but he was born a Roman citizen. In addition to this, his parents were Pharisees and so Paul was given, at home, a strict religious training

in tradition. He had the Semetic religious fervor, Greek versatility, Roman strength, energy and power, and was a Hebrew of the Hebrews.

Paul probably remained in Tarsus until he was about fifteen years old, and while there he attended the Jewish Synagogue School. ¹ When he grew older he was sent to Jerusalem to the Rabbinical School to prepare himself for the office of Rabbi. Here he studied under the great teacher Gamaliel. Gamaliel, from our viewpoint, was narrow, but in contrast with the other teachers of his day, he was very broadminded. Paul could not have learned his intolerance of Christians from Gamaliel. On one occasion we know that Gamaliel advised the Sanhedrin, "Refrain from these men and let them alone, for if this work be of men it will be overthrown but if it is of God ye will not be able to overthrow them."

Many and varied were the influences which combined to fashion the man, Paul, out of the boy, Saul. The influence of his home, his city, and the life there; but most of all, his life at the feet of Gamaliel, produced a lasting effect upon him. Much of his theology which he later taught, he received from Jewish theology. Saul left Gamaliel's school a Pharisee,

1. Robinson: Life of St. Paul, p. 29

and wholeheartedly he put himself into his work,
clinging to all the sacred traditions of his people,
and endeavoring to make everyone else do so.

B. 2. Events Leading to Paul's Conversion

The early training which Saul had received had presented God, not as the loving Heavenly Father whom we know and love, but as a Task-master. We can see from Paul's letters,¹ that his life as a Pharisee was not really a happy one. He was a most zealous Pharisee keeping all the laws, and would have been found blameless in regard to them. And yet peace and happiness did not come. His religion seemed hollow and burdensome and the thousands of rules of his religion did not bring the desired results. The old idea of salvation from sin coming as a result of obedience to the Law of Moses seemed hopeless. His sins bothered him, and he was continually obsessed with the fear of breaking some rule. Then after all this, came the thought, could man ever hope to reach the standard of righteousness which God and the Law required? Not only in actual letter did the Law have to be obeyed, but every grain of meaning had to be scrupulously obeyed. They believed that if but one person could only for one day keep the whole Law and not err in a single point, the Messiah would come and the troubles of Israel would be ended. Saul, the Pharisee, believed in eternity, resurrection, angels, and spirits, but in trying so

1. Romans 7; Galatians 3 and 5

consistently to attain his own righteousness there seemed nothing real - no hope - no help - no enlightenment - no satisfaction - nothing but struggle to attain something impossible. He found that no observance would give him a clean heart - he found that careful obedience to the Law gave him no peace, and we know he yearned for something the Law did not give him and which Pharisaism could not give. He says, "What shall I say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death." (Romans 7: 7-10) Thus Paul, filled with doubts and misgivings, forced himself, in a frenzy of Pharisaic loyalty, in an attempt to regain his own confidence and to convince himself of the invalidity of the Law.

It is difficult to tell when Paul first came in to relations with Christians. It seems certain that he had not seen Jesus, but we know he was present at the stoning of Stephen.

Up to the time of the appointment of the seven, Christianity was consistent with a most scrupulous devotion to Judaism. If Christianity had never advanced further than this it would merely have been a heretical because of its devotion to Judaistic observances and Law. Their church was really another synagogue. "It might have been called the Synagogue of the Nazarenes."

It took a man who had been brought up on a larger and broader view than the disciples to bring the deeper message of Christianity. Stephen, a Hellenist, was able to look on the new faith in its wider bearings and in its relation to the world at large. He realized that the law was not permanent but only incidental and temporary in its nature. Our real knowledge of Stephen is gained solely from the record of a single speech and a single day but that record shows how different his preaching was from that of the twelve, and how much earlier he had arrived at a true appreciation of the words of Jesus.

Jesus had preached the truth to His disciples but this truth, like scores of others, lay dormant. It took a Hellenist with an enlarged vision to see the full impact of Jesus' message, and so we find Stephen in the synagogue, preaching the new ideas which were

bound to stir up action as well as thought.

Stephen did not, however, speak blasphemous words against the Temple and Law or he would have incurred the disapprobation, not of the unconverted Jews alone, but also the Christian Jews as well. Stephen spoke primarily against the ceremonial law. This law was held to have equal authority with the Mosaic and this Stephen attacked as did Jesus. His message carried the thought that temple attendance and external observances do not promise acceptance by God. He also repeated Christ's prophecies concerning the destruction of the temple and the city, but gave no interpretation of them as affecting the binding character of the Law. So we find trouble arising, not concerning the neglect of the Law, but the emphasis upon the spiritual character of the future Messianic kingdom and the seeming neglect of its physical and political aspects which seemed to many to be threatening the validity of the Law.

Stephen's speech was not a direct defense of himself, but a warning to his accusers that the possession of the temple and the Law would not insure the presence of God and God's acceptance of them. His purpose seemed to have been to show that at all stages of their national history the Israelites had withstood and opposed the



the purposes of God and that their rejection of Jesus was quite in keeping with their past history. He also desired to prove that religion is independent of place, and thus to vindicate his attitude to the temple. He showed that if he had said that Jesus had changed the customs which Moses had delivered, that Moses himself had indicated that in God's due time his entire dispensation was doomed to pass away. The unmistakable intention of drawing a parallel between Moses and Jesus is present.

Stephen's teachings are based on the words of Jesus and the prophecies of old, with the broader interpretation that only a Hellenist could give at the time. The very term in which he characterized them were borrowed from their own law and prophets.

Stephen's speech was a tremendous force in the progress of Christianity. It brought Christianity for the first time into distinct and open religious conflict with Judaism. The Christians were denounced as heretics, and persecuted as a direct result of Stephen's work. It hastened the separation of the new religion from Judaism, which two religions had not yet discovered that they were irreconcilable, and led to the dispersion of the Christians. This dispersion prepared the way for an extended missionary campaign

which meant the rapid and wide spread of Christianity. It changed the church from a Judaistic sect at Jerusalem into the Church of the Gentiles and of the world.

Another far-reaching result was the impression which this message made on the heart of Saul of Tarsus.

The authenticity of Stephen's speech had been much canvassed and several views are being set forth.

Apart from the fact that two secretaries were always present at the judicial proceedings of the Sanhedrin, there are times when the words of speakers are fairly branded upon the ears of their hearers and this surely was such a time. We can trace the deep impression which this speech made on the mind of Paul and we have little difficulty in believing that its preservation was largely due to Paul.

Saul, like the other Pharisees, was expecting the Messiah - a kingly Messiah - one who would come in glory and power to redeem Israel from foreign dominion and set up a world kingdom. When he heard Stephen boldly declare that the Messiah had come and had been crucified, we can imagine his reaction. The Law and a crucified Messiah could not go together and the result was a hostility to the Christians, and a desire to do away with them. This desire cost Stephen his

life, and probably the lives of countless other Christians. The great zeal of Saul made him the heart and soul of the endeavor to stamp out the Christian faith. He made havoc of the Christian church - he ravaged it. He visited the synagogues and he went from house to house dragging Christians out to their imprisonment and death. Many of them fled to safer places, and thus we find Saul's movements completely successful in Jerusalem. There was no more preaching in Solomon's Porch, nor any more public gatherings - only a few secret meetings of the handful that were left.

All this must have made a profound impression upon Saul. He had seen Stephen die a terrible death, yet with his face reflecting a wonderful happiness and glory as he prayed, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." He had seen much of the Christian spirit; had seen the Christians when their faith was on trial, had seen them worshipping; had seen them eating the common meal where rich and poor alike were gathered together around the table to commemorate the Last Supper. He had seen the Christian rite of baptism, which could not have helped but make a deep impression on him because it symbolized a freeing of the soul from sin.

Yet in spite of all this, the persecutions were carried on with even more determination and zeal. In

spite of the misgivings of his heart and mind, he plunged headlong, madly, into still greater persecutions. His work in Jerusalem was over and successful, but he was not through. Many of those who had fled had gathered together in other places, and so it was to these groups that Saul's attention now turned. Damascus had the largest group and so this city claimed his attention and energy first.

However travelled, the journey from Jerusalem to Damascus could not take less than a week, and on this long journey Saul was bound to think of the happenings of the past weeks. Being a thoughtful man, and having had doubts already enter his mind, he could not help but meditate on these things. If he had thought about the rightness of it all, it only served to send him on more furiously and madly than before in order to ease his conscience against such disloyalties to his profession. "Pride, the pride of system, the pride of nature, the rank pride of the self-styled theologian, the exclusive national Pharisaic pride in which he had been trained, forbade him to examine seriously whether he might not after all be in the wrong."¹ He could not and would not admit that he had been in the wrong; that men like Peter and Stephen were right;

1. Farrar: Life and Work of St. Paul, p. 102

that Jesus was the Messiah for whose coming he had been working and longing. Now he had plenty of time to think - he could not converse with those who were to carry out his orders, so he had to think. He had nothing to do but meditate, and we may be sure he thought about that which had troubled him before - the Law. What had it done for him - what joy had he received - what promise of salvation - would the coming of the Messiah bring individual as well as national victory and salvation? And so on, his thoughts must have gone. Then he must have thought about and meditated upon the Christians and what they had said. They had said that the Messiah had come and he seemed to have brought them peace, comfort, strength, and courage. True, he had died; he had even been crucified, but they had prophecies to prove that that was what was what was foretold would happen.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."
(Isaiah 53:4-6, R.V.)

They said the Messiah brought forgiveness of sins for the individual. Then undoubtedly he thought of Stephen and of his teachings and death. Would obedience to the Law illumine a man's face as Stephen's was illuminated? Would the Law make poor and rich dine together and help each other? No, he knew it would not! What was it then? Who was this Jesus of Nazareth? Had he been doing the wrong thing by persecuting them? These doubts and others filled his mind until he was torn between loyalty to his old convictions and the doubts surrounding them now. His old hopes were bankrupt and he sought peace, but found it not; he longed to be reconciled to God, but knew not how. The failure of what he had relied upon prepared him in a measure to listen to any new promise that might give him peace. Thus he travelled on toward the great city of Damascus, where he was to continue his cruel and bloody persecutions, adding to the misery and suffering of the world - harming the most meek and pure in heart.

B. 3. Conversion and Results

Suddenly the wonder happened. Along the road to Damascus, not far from the city itself, and at noon, a great dazzling light - brighter than the Syrian sun itself - shone down from heaven and he heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Then everything was forgotten; all his old worries and doubts disappeared. He recognized Jesus as the Messiah and his longings were fulfilled. He no longer was dependent on the Law; he no longer needed to seek salvation through the Law because he too had seen Christ and found pardon.

The conversion of Paul marked an important epoch in the history of the apostolic church and mankind. It is recorded three times in Acts, and Paul refers to it in his letters. It originally, of course, came from Paul, and we find him using it in his defense before Agrippa, and we know he told it at other times. Luke would have plenty of opportunities to hear Paul tell others about it and to talk with him about it.

There are many differences in the various accounts, but regardless of these, the fact remains that Paul was converted. All accounts agree that the conversion took place on the way to Damascus and that there was a blinding, dazzling light brighter than the noon-day

sun. Paul heard a voice saying, "I am Jesus," and all accounts would indicate that it was no physical man appearing to Paul, but a heavenly vision. From this time on, Christ was Paul's chief concern - "For me to live is Christ."

The differences, after all, are but minor ones and do not affect the real meaning of the experience one single bit. All accounts state that there was a light, although there are differences concerning it. Acts 9 says: "A light out of heaven shone around about him." Acts 22 says: "His companions beheld the light which shone round about Paul." Acts 26 says: "The light shone round about the companions also so that they were all fallen to the earth." Acts 9 gives: "The companions heard the voice;" Acts 22: "They heard not the voice;" and Acts 26: "I heard a voice." Acts 9 says the duration of blindness was three days and Ananias gave to him the Holy Spirit and the scales fell from his eyes. Chapter 22 has Ananias giving the command to Paul, while in chapter 26 Ananias is not even mentioned and the commission is given by Jesus Himself.

The best solution to this problem is probably the fact that Luke was unconcerned about details. He was deeply concerned with the fact that Paul was a changed man and convinced that Jesus was alive as the Messiah and the Son of God.

A great number of theories for the solution of the problem are offered but we shall mention only three, which after all, include most of the others - namely: the literal or physical theory, the intellectual or rational theory, and the psychological or psychical theory.

A conversion of this kind without psychological influences would not be possible. The chasm separating a Jewish persecutor from a Christian apostle was too great to be bridged without intellectual help and such a conversion with its attendant results also had a touch of the literal. One fact remains upon any hypothesis and that is that the conversion of Paul was, in the highest sense of the word, a unique experience.

It seems inconceivable that a man like Paul would do no serious thinking after witnessing such a spectacle as the stoning of Stephen. Also without a doubt the lives of the Christians with their nobility and courage in times of persecution, and their sense of brotherhood impressed Paul greatly. Undoubtedly he had a keen intellectual preparation for this, and his journey to Damascus, as has been stated before, gave him ample opportunity to think over everything he had seen and heard.

That he was emotionally "keyed up" seems a plausible statement, too. In order to still his own doubts and fears and troubles concerning his own religion he plunged headlong into these persecutions. It was a psychological reaction to his doubts and fears. Then suddenly everything was ended - the eager haste, the struggle, the feverish doubts. A great, wonderful, mystical experience came to Paul - an experience which cannot be interpreted in rational language. The light and the voice and the message, while they were probably not phenomena that could be seen and heard by others, were so real and vivid to Paul that it seemed that they actually had happened.

Men see in two ways which are very different from each other. The one is normal vision; and the other, visionary sight. Objects seen by either means seem equally real to the observer.

Paul saw a bright light which his companions did not see; he heard a voice, and he had a vision of the exalted Christ. The immediate effect of the vision was a blindness for Paul which was a literal experience. The glare of the Syrian sun on the sands, the light which he had really seen, whether in actuality or in vision, and the general condition of his mind and body resulted in a temporary blindness.

All this would not lessen the wonder of the experience, for it is one of the greatest experiences of history. I would not deny that these phenomena could not actually and literally have taken place. It just does not seem likely. God can take, I believe, ordinary occurrences and situations; he can take us in our present conditions and work things out according to his own plan, in a normal way. If Saul only had a vision of all these things, which seems most likely, God was able to bring forth tremendous and far-reaching results regardless of that fact. If we would really understand such an experience we must have a knowledge that is beyond the power of ordinary man. The experience must be interpreted in spiritual language. In real fact all these theories agree and that is that Paul had a great experience which resulted in his becoming a disciple of Jesus and recognizing Him as the Messiah.

At once Paul was confronted by two seemingly incongruous elements: Jesus, the Messiah, and the consciousness that He had been crucified. The Greek's horror of death was a physical aversion. He revolted from everything which hindered the pleasures of this life. The Jews too had a horror of death, but it was based on moral shame. Paul was required to accept,

as the Messiah, one whom he believed to be dead. He had to start with the cross and then go to the human scenes. He says, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord." His experience and knowledge began with Christ. The other disciples knew Jesus in the flesh and were able to gradually make the change, but Paul began with the crucified and yet exalted Christ.

The conversion meant for Paul a new conception of life itself. His worship changed, his religion changed; the world seemed different and he had a new conception of God. He was fond of saying that "he had died with Christ." Saul the persecutor, truly had died and Paul, the apostle, was born. He had received the salvation which he sought for so intently, not from the Law but through Christ. Here it was that "he entered into that mystical fellowship with Jesus which made the real secret of his apostolic service and success." 1

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the conversion of Paul. To him Christianity was now summed up in one word: "Christ." He, Saul the Pharisee, became a preacher of the Resurrection, a preacher of the Cross, a preacher of Christ, the Son of God, the

1. Lowstater: Paul, Campaigner for Christ, p. 67

revealer of the Father, an abiding presence and a constant inspiration.

Thus we find Saul breaking completely with the Orthodox Judaism and setting out on the Christian road.

Paul's Break with Judaistic Christianity

A. Sets Christ beyond the Borders of Judaism

1. Causes

The spread of Christianity was very rapid during these early days. The interval between Christ's death and Stephen's death is estimated at from two to five years and yet the following persecutions showed that there were already many Christians in Jerusalem.

Acts 1:15 says "there were about a hundred and twenty"; Acts 2:41 says "three thousand souls were added to the church"; and Acts 4:4 says "the number of men who believed the word was above five thousand." These figures very likely are exaggerated but the fact remains that the church did grow rapidly.

Stephen, one of the seven, became a vital force in the spread of Christianity. Through his speech and his death Christianity was brought for the first time into open conflict with Judaism which led to its separation from Judaism and to the dispersion of the Christians. This dispersion was very important because these people, mostly Hellenists, told others about Jesus wherever they went and thus the way was being prepared for future missionary campaigns.

Philip, the other one of the seven whom we can observe, went to Samaria and there he carried on a successful ministry of preaching and teaching. This

Samaritan mission shows the new faith reaching out to those who were not full Jews but still not Gentiles. Philip, however, had a hand in extending the bounds of the new faith still further. He recognized that the Christian faith was to be infinitely wider and greater than the Mosaic Law permitted and so when the Eunuch, very likely however, a proselyte, desired baptism, he baptized him. Philip's subsequent work in the towns of Philistia and along the sea-coast and also in Samaria were very fruitful and thus the Christian Church was spread in Samaria and also in the south. At the time of Saul's conversion we know there were many Christians in Damascus because he was on his way there to persecute them. There were also believers in Joppa and Lydda and so we can picture to ourselves little groups of Christians throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria even to Damascus, but they were all Jews or proselytes as the Eunuch.

The first recorded real departure from primitive principles took place in connection with the Caesarean centurion, Cornelius. Cornelius was not a Jew but a Gentile who worshipped the God of the Jews and who would not accept circumcision. When Peter baptized Cornelius there was a distinct violation of the principles that had before this guided the disciples.

The disciples now were forced to admit the possibility of a Gentile conversion but they did not see even yet the rise of a Christian Church where the Law should have no recognition. They conceded that "God had also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life " (Acts 11:18) but not that the Gentiles were to be admitted without circumcision to full communion.

The historicity of this incident has been doubted by many because they say that if the Christians at Jerusalem had acquiesced to Peter's movements here they would not have rebelled at Antioch. This objection implies a misunderstanding of the incident for which Luke is partially responsible. The Christians at Jerusalem did not go all the way - they only acknowledged the legitimacy of a Gentile Christian and not the right of any Jew to cease observing the Jewish Law.

The only important difference between the Jews who were Christians and those who were not was the former's belief in Jesus as the Messiah. It was impossible for Christianity to flourish within the limits of Judaism but the Hellenistic Jew saved it from peril. The first Christian Jews had been brought up in the Laws of Judaism and so to them circumcision was a necessary rite to be performed. To do without it was inconceivable and yet there was a gradual break away from the Judaistic tendencies.

In the meantime the wandering Hellenists had reached Antioch and they boldly preached to the Gentiles. The church at Jerusalem on hearing of it immediately sent Barnabas to Antioch. Barnabas was sympathetic with the work and he soon saw that he needed help. He was so very much impressed with the importance of the task that he sent for Paul to aid him, so it was that Paul not only had to break with Judaism but also with Judaistic Christianity. Just as definitely as he had received a call from God to become a believer in Jesus, so did he receive a call to be a missionary to the Gentiles, - "Go, for I will send thee forth afar to the Gentiles." (Acts 22:17-21)

It was here that a Christianity was spreading which did not recognize the circumcision of the Jews and it was this issue which became such a paramount one.

Everywhere however that Paul went he spoke first to the Jews in their synagogue and upon being rejected turned to the Gentiles. This does not conflict with Paul's call - because while he believed in legitimacy of Gentile preaching it did not exclude his own people; so one vital reason for Paul carrying his message beyond Judaism was Judaism itself. Thus we see that Paul's call, the Jews' rejection of him, and the preparation which Peter and the Hellenists made were the causes for Paul taking his message to the Gentiles and

thus making Christianity a universal religion.

A. 2. Manner

This question of circumcision became a vital issue and one which had to be settled. The Judaizers insisted that one could not be saved without first being circumcised. Paul and Barnabas did not hold this view and freely admitted the Gentiles without being circumcised. Paul said that circumcision was an outward sign and of no value unless accompanied by obedience. He held that an uncircumcised keeper of the Law was better than a circumcised breaker of it. Someone had to say "The old is done away" and it was Paul who received the vision and who said it.

It was a serious situation however because while Paul might be confident of his own apostolic calling yet some of these objectors had been Jesus' own companions and their words carried weight. Was all of Paul's work to be done away, were all the Gentiles to have to conform to Jewish external practices? Were the fruits of the Spirit, love joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, to be of small consequence while the externalities of the ceremonial laws to be regarded of prime importance? The Judaizers had tradition, authority, and law on their side and yet Paul dared to say that the Gentiles should remain free and under the conditions with which they accepted Christianity. Paul

confidently regarded the message of Christ as a new force abolishing the religion of the Law. Moral character was the issue at stake and not external ceremonial observance.

The dispute continued and finally it was decided that Paul, Barnabas, and Titus should go to Jerusalem to settle the matter. Probably the Judaizers themselves demanded their coming, however, Paul felt that it was the will of God that he should go. They went before the apostles and in spite of the opposition of the latter succeeded in convincing them that it was God's will that the Gospel be preached to the Gentiles and that the Gentiles could be saved without the law of circumcision. He still had opponents however who, when they found themselves defeated, proposed that Titus should be circumcised. Paul and Barnabas refused to give way to such a proposal because it involved a principle. By his refusal he asserted openly the full rights of Gentile Christianity and asked them openly "if the Law is essential to salvation, what then has been the work of Christ?"

Peter arose and in substance said that since these laws and customs were given to the Jews and not to the Greeks, and since they were unnecessary to salvation they must be a burden and a stumbling block to the Greeks.

James then spoke and proposed that the Law be not binding to the Gentiles but that it remain so to the Jews. The debate was ended and the results far-reaching. Paul received the right hand of fellowship, his call to preach to the Gentiles was recognized, his message was left intact, but it was not agreed that his message was to be preached among the Jews. Thus it left not a union but two distinct messages, - the law was to continue as binding upon the Jews and freedom was given to the heathen alone. Paul was asked to urge the Gentile Christians to send alms for the needy Jewish Christians in Jerusalem and thus the Gentile Christians were given an opportunity to express and promote some semblance of unity with those at Jerusalem.

An episode which took place at Antioch a short time after this served to widen Paul's break with Judaistic Christianity. After the Jerusalem Conference some of the Jews threw aside their religious observances and ate with the Gentiles, thus violating the Jewish law of clean and unclean. Peter came to Antioch and saw how happy everyone was and how unified both Gentiles and Jews were that he too joined in the spirit of the place and associated with the uncircumcised. Later messengers came from Jerusalem and

seeing Peter in the midst of the Gentiles took him to task for his conduct. Immediately he withdrew and all the other Jewish Christians did also. Thus by his actions Peter distinctly told the Gentiles that they were unclean because they were not observing the law.

This episode brought up a question which had not been discussed at Jerusalem, namely, the relation of Jewish and Gentile Christians when living in the same community. The conflict in such a community seemed to mean either that the Jews had to be freed from the law or the Gentiles had to keep the law. Paul then insisted that if the Gentiles had to keep the law that it would be a violation of the agreements at the Jerusalem Conference and insistence on the law would mean a denial of the Gospel of Christ. In order to conciliate the legalists a compromise decision was reached some time after this incident that a Gentile Christian when living among Jewish Christians should "abstain from meat offered to idols, from blood, and from things strangled and from fornication"¹ "not a basis for Christian standing but as a basis of association with Jews."² Thus the break widened and the numbers of Paul's enemies increased. As he developed his ideas concerning Salvation he plunged himself into

1. Acts 15:29

2. Robinson: Life of Paul, p. 108

still greater trouble and removed Christianity still further from Judaism.

B. Dissatisfaction with Legal Character of Religion
Brought about Paul's Plan of Salvation

1. Pre-Pauline Ideas Concerning Salvation

Paul found no satisfaction in the law and the mere doing of works did not bring that which he desired. Then, Paul met Christ and found that God is love and that by His love He can redeem man if they will trust and love Him. It is not strange to learn that Paul's idea of salvation was different from that of the Hebrews and even that of the disciples, and it is this which led to his complete break with Judaism. Paul had had an experience which they had not had and he had found the answer to "Who shall deliver me from the body given over to death?"

Salvation as used in the Bible is a term denoting deliverance, deliverance of God but very especially is it used in regard to spiritual redemption from sin and its consequences.

In the Old Testament the term salvation may be illustrated by the words of Moses at the Red Sea, "Stand still and see the salvation of Jehovah." Victory in battle was regarded as salvation also. These external deliverances however were not without their spiritual accompaniment because it was the righteous

or the penitént only who was entitled to look to God for such a salvation. With the use of Messianic prophecy a new note or development in salvation is seen. It is still external but victory is not looked for in the present. A preceding judgment is to take place and then only for the faithful remnant will Jehovah show himself as Savior. In the apocalyptic books salvation deepens in ethical and spiritual meaning. In the early history of Israel the conception of salvation had been national but as time went on it became more individual. In most of the Old Testament salvation is a conception which has meaning only for this life. Salvation was deliverance from the consequences of sin rather than from sin itself. With a deepening moral sense the cry arose to God for deliverance from sin itself. "Create in me a clean heart," the Psalmist wrote. When the people had sinned they had to repent in order to receive salvation. So we find in the days of the prophets that the emphasis was placed on a changed heart, forgiveness, restoration to God's favor and righteousness. As this idea became more spiritualized it became more universal until even the Gentiles were included.

Summing up the conceptions of salvation up to the time of Jesus we find four:

1. Salvation in this life in the sense of deliverance from present danger or trouble.
2. Salvation of Messianic kingdom to be enjoyed by all the righteous who may be alive at the time, as well as by the risen saints.
3. Salvation after death, in the sense of a preliminary foretaste, by the righteous, of the enjoyment of the age to come.
4. The final salvation of the heavenly world when the present earth has been destroyed and the period of corruption has come to an end.

In the New Testament the word is sometimes applied to temporal benefits as healings but more generally it refers to spiritual blessings brought to men by the appearance and work of Jesus. The salvation which Jesus brought was and is a fellowship with God which guarantees peace in this world and eternal life. To be saved according to Jesus means simply to enter upon a life fitted to the children of such a Father, a life whose marks are righteousness, brotherly love, trustful dependence upon God, a life only fully realized in the future when the redeemed shall be released from earthly limitations and enter the new conditions of the resurrection life, yet in a true sense possible even now for all those who, like Him, have learned to

know God as their Father and through the life of self-denying service have entered upon a blessedness which no earthly trial or misfortune can disturb. So we find Jesus speaking of salvation as a present experience. Jesus also teaches individual righteousness. In place of a God who cared only for spiritual aristocracy whose pleasure it was to make hard conditions that He might increase the value of the few who were saved He proclaims a compassionate and loving Father willing to receive back the returning prodigal upon the first evidence of repentance. According to Jesus men are saved that they may serve, self-realization through self-sacrifice. Jesus taught that repentance is the first consideration. This implies a change of mind, the renunciation of a sinful life and the turning to God. Salvation also is represented as a participation in the Kingdom of God as obedient sonship. It is realized in becoming like God in the life of love. The basis of salvation is in the undeserved favor of the all-loving Father and it is realized in the individual only by a conscious acceptance of the proffered good. We find strong emphasis laid upon the importance of right relations to Jesus himself and the attitude of men towards Jesus determines their relation to God. The saving power of the words and deeds of Jesus is grounded in what he is and so a very

important problem which presents itself is, What is the saving significance of the death of the Messiah? "Wendt says that 'the language of Jesus ascribes a saving significance to his death and that the church is quite justified in attributing beneficial effects to this event in his Messianic work on behalf of man.' Beyschlag says 'Towards the end of his life we have declarations about the saving significance of his death.'" ¹ "Wendt also holds that the death of the Messiah is regarded as a means of purchasing men's freedom from suffering and death in the sense that it is an example of supreme devotion to God. Christ frees many, namely those who will learn of him; he teaches them by example to rise inwardly, through pious humility and assurance of salvation, above death and so to transform death for themselves from a fearful tyrant into a means of salvation." ² While Jesus does refer to man's relation to himself in some passages, it is man's relationship to God which Jesus regards as the important thing. The belief in Christ himself is emphasized because it means belief in or acceptance of the God who sent him and whom he reveals.

The Jewish idea in Paul's time was that salvation was to be won by good deeds, especially by the

1. Stevens: Theology of the New Testament, p. 126

2. Ibid, p. 128

observance of commandments. The practical result of this theory was the development of a spirit of self-righteousness on the one hand and a feeling of uncertainty of acceptance with God on the other. If one had faithfully fulfilled all the requirements he could easily become self-satisfied and yet it was difficult to know whether one had done enough. Thus their religious consciousness wavered perpetually between these two ideas.

Christianity to these people was Judaism and nothing more. It was simply the belief that Jesus was the Messiah and was no abandonment of existing principles. For a Jew to believe in the Messiah whom they preached was not necessarily to revise his conceptions of the Messianic kingdom nor the conditions for entering that kingdom. When Peter said, "Repent and be baptized", he was simply reiterating a principle universally prevalent among the Jews of his time, namely, that righteousness is an indispensable condition of enjoying God's favor. Peter in proclaiming Jesus as Messiah was not ceasing to emphasize the consistent observance of the Jewish law and to give a summons to repentance for wrong doing. The salvation which he taught was not a present realization but the making certain of the enjoyment of a future salvation through faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ.

B. 2. Paul's Teaching

It is the principle of salvation by faith which separates Paul's teaching so widely from the popular Jewish conceptions of his time and which accounts for the distinctive elements of his theology. Paul contends that not outward possession of the law but inward obedience avails with God. According to Paul mankind as a whole is the prey of a power of evil which it cannot resist and from which it is unable to escape. From Adam's downfall all men have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Being sinful they are exposed to the curse of the law and to the death which is the inevitable consequence and penalty of broken law. Glory of Christian salvation consists in the fact that it delivers men from this sinful flesh and so at the same time from the law which is its judge and the death which is its penal consequence. If the Gentiles do that which the law of Moses requires without possessing the law they would surpass the Jews themselves in the approval of God since the Jews possess the law but are not doers of it. Paul also teaches that the true relation of the law to the Gospel is that of a subordinate position. They are not antagonistic to each other and appear so only when the law is misunderstood. It was never

meant to be a means of salvation but must become subordinate to the order of salvation whose condition is faith. Paul had tried the Judaistic way of salvation and had found it insufficient. It had brought him no peace nor freedom and he knew that he could not establish his own salvation, namely a righteousness gained by legal works. The much-to-be desired salvation came to him through faith in Christ. Salvation cannot be received on the basis of debt but only on the basis of grace. The idea of salvation by works would imply that God bestows forgiveness as something due.

"The motive of salvation is God's mercy to the undeserving, faith is the attitude on man's part which corresponds to grace; it is the disposition to accept God's gracious gift. Salvation is possible because God treats men better than they deserve." ¹ In portraying the truths of salvation by faith rather than works Paul shows in Romans 4 that the promise was given to Abraham because he believed God and his faith was reckoned unto him for righteousness. The promise did not rest upon Abraham's legal obedience but on righteousness which is by faith. Paul in this great chapter concludes that salvation comes by the way of faith and bases his argument on the validity of the

1. Stevens: Theology of Paul, p. 418

promises of old.

Paul also uses the doctrine of the cross to prove this point. He claims that if righteousness were attainable by the deeds of the law there would not be any other way of salvation and the cross would be rendered useless. But by supposition this is impossible to accept and the way by the law must be regarded as wholly inadequate. Then he also uses a psychological argument to show that the law quickens the consciousness of sin and makes transgressions abound and gives no hope for salvation. "The glory of the law must ever pale before the brighter." The inadequacy of the law forms the transition from the Jewish to the Pauline idea of the relation of law to sin. The law could punish disobedience, induce to outward conformity and even by motives and promises induce to obedience but perfect righteousness did not result. Hence the way by deeds of the law is shut and only the way of grace and faith is left. Paul does have a place for the law however. He teaches that the purpose of the law was to quicken the consciousness and intensify the power of sin. The law reveals sin as transgression and sharpened the sinful self-consciousness by revealing sin as such. The law always will be worthy of all honor but its chief glory

must ever be it served to usher in the gospel. In the letter to the Galatians Paul was compelled to defend the validity of his apostleship and the truth of his teaching against the ardent Judaizers who insisted that Christians must become Jews. "If ye receive circumcision Christ will profit you nothing," (Galatians 3:2) a statement which at first thought seems to imply utter lack of harmony. However those who advocated circumcision did so because they believed it an essential condition of salvation. Paul did not argue against circumcision as such but against it as a coordinate condition of salvation with faith in Christ. He believed in one way of salvation. If faith in Christ is the true way then circumcision and deeds of obedience to the law are excluded.

The death and resurrection of Christ represent to Paul's mind God's objective provision for man's salvation. Justification is a name for the way in which the saving benefits of Christ's work are made available for the individual. Justification treats of his personal appropriation of salvation or that man upon condition of exercising faith in the Redeemer is declared to be righteous in God's sight and is received and treated as such. Faith then which is the condition of the justifying judgment is clearly

a contrast to works. It is the opposite of achievement or deserving; it is self-surrender, humility, and acceptance. It is trust in God's grace and in personal trust in Christ. Faith and grace thus become the center of Paul's whole teaching. Grace is the principle in God which initiates and completes the work of salvation, and faith is the act in which man appropriates it. Faith is an affair of the heart and is closely akin to love. Faith is opposed to works only in the sense of deeds, of legal obedience contemplated as the worthy grounds of salvation. In faith man enters into fellowship and sympathy with God. Righteousness does not mean moral perfection but a state of gracious acceptance into which the believer upon condition of his faith is admitted. It is an acquittal which proceeds from God whereby the believer is declared to be forgiven. Salvation is by faith because faith is the act of acceptance by the soul of Christ as its Master and of His spirit as its law. The person, in the sense of justification, pronounced righteous is so in the sense of having begun the life of real righteousness, the life which is well-pleasing to God. Faith leads to confident assurance of salvation because it reposes solely in the grace of God. In the very act of renouncing works

as a means of attaining divine favor, faith presupposes the willingness of God to accept those who make no claims of personal worthiness and who consent to receive forgiveness as a gift of grace. This act of self-surrender is the act by which man enters into the possession of full salvation thereby he escapes out of himself, and putting his case beyond the reach of mere human standards of judgment, he casts himself upon the compassion of God. Thus we see that justification is the formal act by which one is admitted to the Christian life and that faith is the condition of this admission.

The religious value of faith lies in the results, namely the relation of fellowship with Christ. Paul's favorite expression for designating this relationship is that of the believer dwelling in Christ or of Christ in him. No one can understand Paul's doctrine of salvation who does not conceive it primarily as present union with the Divine and Glorified Christ. What our Lord has once done each individual Christian is to repeat in the lesser stage of his earthly life. He too must share the sufferings of Christ and sit with Him in heavenly places. The life which he lives is to be no longer his, but that of Christ who liveth in him. Though to live be Christ,

to die is gain, for dying means departing to be with Christ which is far better. The one who is in Christ is a new creature. To be justified implies a new heart. If the beginning of the Christian life is a breaking loose from sin, its continuance must be characterized by a positive attainment of believers. If we have begun by dying with Christ we must continue by rising with him into a new spiritual character. A Christian is no longer in the flesh but in the spirit. Even though God in his grace acquits, the believer cannot go on in sin. To Paul salvation is not merely deliverance from future punishment, it includes freedom from sin as a present power. Through union with Christ the believer has become a new creature. He has died to sin, crucified the flesh and entered upon a new spiritual life of righteousness, peace and joy. Already he is a saved man, reconciled to God, claiming and receiving the privileges of a son. He still has his conflict with evil but it is not a discouraging one. Whereas he once felt himself the slave of sin now he knows himself to be its master. The law of the spirit of life in Jesus has made him free from the law of sin and of death. To be accepted with God involves a new life, it means a new heart as well as a new standing. The Christian dies to sin and

breaks off all relation to his old sinful life and arises to a holy life. The justified person is a holy person and there is no place for sin. Justification is justification from sin as well as acquittal from guilt and condemnation. Paul's use of the terms "dwelling with Christ" and "rising in Him" expressed for him and us the inner nature of the Christian life and correlated it with Christ who is the living and guiding power in the Christian.

Paul has another theory of salvation which is called the doctrine of substitutionary atonement. This theory is that Christ died in order to save men. He "dies in behalf of our sins", that is to save us from them. According to the Roman law a culprit was guilty when he came into the courtroom and remained so until he was proven innocent. Another custom which the Romans had was that any member of the culprit's family could take his penalty and suffer for him. Paul was familiar with this practice and from it he developed his substitutionary atonement doctrine. The result of sin is penalty; Christ, by his death, averted that penalty and in that sense his death was substituted for that penalty. Paul's idea seems to be that Christ was so far substituted for us that his sufferings and death accomplished the end which punishment would accomplish, namely, the expression of

God's displeasure against sin. However this substitution means not the substitution of Christ's punishment for our punishment but the substitution of his sufferings which were not of the nature of punishment, for our punishment. The death of Christ is the price of man's salvation and it represents the greatness of God's self-sacrificing love. Believers are justified freely and without the payment of any price on their part through the payment of ransom price which Christ has made.

Two problems present themselves here, however, in answer to the question In what sense did all die in and with his death? One answer is, all were under sentence of death for their sins but Christ appeared as their substitute and died in their stead. So virtually all died with Christ and paid the penalty of sin in his vicarious death. The second answer is that Christ died in our behalf and all died to sin. Christ in his death showed forth the love of God for sinful humanity, and presented God as a loving heavenly Father.

In what sense is Christ's death for us, and his sufferings instead of our punishment? A punishment of Christ instead of the guilty party would imply the literal transfer of the guilt of man to him; for punishment where there is no guilt would be an

injustice and guilt cannot be attached to an innocent person. Therefore the conclusion is that Christ died on our behalf and not instead of us. In what sense then can Christ's sufferings have been a substitute for man's punishment? They can have been so only in the sense that though not the same in quality or quantity they answered the essential moral ends of punishment. Instead of the sinner being punished Christ assumed the way of vindicating and satisfying the moral requirements of law and holiness. The substitution of Christ does not mean that he took our punishment, a substitution which would be purely mechanical; nor does it mean that he personally assumed our guilt and suffered its punishment, a substitution which would be unjust. Christ's suffering and death mean simply the substitution of another course of divine action instead of the inflicting of penalty.

Christ's sufferings may be contemplated as a substitute for punishment because they were borne by the sinless Christ as a testimony to the hatefulness of sin and the justice of God's decision that misery and suffering should follow sin as its penalty. Man was under the penal consequences of sin and Christ came under these by becoming the object of sinful treatment and by the realization himself of sin's

guilt and he attests by the severity of his sufferings vicariously borne the righteousness of God's hostility to sin. "Christ entered through the vicariousness of infinite love into man's case." "He is made sin for us inasmuch as on our behalf he enters by a sympathetic identification of himself with us into the intense realization of our sin and guilt and therein fully acknowledges the justice of the sufferings which are divinely appointed as sin's consequence." ¹

Christ is thus a means of reconciling God and man. God is rendered favorable to man's forgiveness by the work of Christ in the sense that an adequate revelation of his righteousness against sin is made in his sufferings. Christ thus removes an obstacle to forgiveness by pursuing another course than that of punishing. This restoration of man to the favor and fellowship of God from which he had been separated by sin is grounded in the eternal purpose of God's love. Christ's substitutionary atonement is the proof of God's love to humanity. Christ is the mediator of salvation which he accomplishes primarily by his death.

Another element in Paul's idea of salvation is found in his doctrine of the election. The God in whom Paul believed is not the God of the Jews only but

1. Stevens: Pauline Theology, p. 249

also of the Gentiles, yet he bears a special relation to the Jews. Paul's idea of the election is that the Jewish nation was set apart for a special mission in the world as the bearer of God's revelation to all mankind. The great sin of the Jewish nation is that they have narrowed the mercy of God and have thought that the blessings of heaven belong to them alone. It is against this that Paul protested. Paul's doctrine of the elect treats primarily with the election of a people and not an individual. It deals with election to a historic function or mission and not election to eternal destiny.

Paul also speaks of God's foreknowing and fore-ordaining men to be "conformed to the image of his son and of Christians as being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. Christians are thus called the elect." God from the beginning chose them to salvation in sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth." (II. Thessalonians 2:13) Paul is a predestinarian but does not teach eternal, unconditional predestination of some men to final salvation and of others to final condemnation. Paul's whole doctrine of sin assumes that Adam fell freely and voluntarily. Adam's sin was contrary to the will of God. It also assumes that all men who perish do so by their own

fault. The salvation of all is the aim of the Gospel. God "willeth that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." (I. Timothy 2:4) "Christ came to be the 'Savior of all men.'" (I. Timothy 4:10) "God may chose some and reject some; he may appoint some to one career and others to another: his ways are past finding out; he may do what he will; but whatever he does, it is to the end, 'that he may have mercy upon all'." ¹ Paul's doctrine of predestination and election is a carrying back of God's actual dealings with men into his eternal purpose. Thus what God does, he from eternity intended to do. Since the purpose of God is to save men, each man is saved because it was God's purpose to save him therefore Christians are said to be "foreordained unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ." (Ephesians 1:5) Election is the application of the preordaining purpose. The purpose of salvation is the election of the individual or class to salvation. God's eternal purpose of grace, ideally or virtually embraces all men. God wishes to save all and Christ came to save all. In spite of God's choice of Israel some separated themselves so it may be in the purpose of salvation. God cannot annul men's freedom which is part of His plan in the

1. Stevens: Theology of the New Testament, p. 386

world. God may foreordain whatsoever comes to pass but freedom and realization of salvation upon moral terms and conditions also comes to pass.

It must be called to mind that we cannot take Paul's doctrines and make a system of salvation from them. With each new experience that Paul had, there came to him a new understanding of salvation and other matters. But through it all is the truth that Christ is the mediator of salvation and declares that it is God's purpose through Christ to reconcile all things unto Him.

Conclusion

Much space has been devoted to Orthodox Judaism in this thesis because it is absolutely necessary to an understanding of Paul's separation from it and from Judaistic Christianity. Paul's conversion becomes comprehensible and inevitable when we know not only about him but also the background from which he came and his training.

He was a Jew, a Hebrew of the Hebrews and a Pharisee. He had been thoroughly trained in all the history of his race and in the observance of the Law. He knew and understood and was so jealous of the Law of Moses that it was continually before his mind.

"You shall not consent unto him
Nor listen to him
Neither shall your eye pity him
Neither shall you spare.

Neither shall you conceal him
But you shall surely kill him
You shall stone him with stones that he
die;
Because he has tried to draw you
Away from the Lord your God."

Having been trained thus and being a zealous Pharisee we would expect him to persecute the Christians, and he did. But the Law did not bring all to Paul that he needed and desired and disappointment in spite of his zeal resulted. Paul the Pharisee believed

in the doctrine of Pharisaism - eternity, resurrection, angels, spirits, and in the Mosaic Law but the more scrupulously he strove to attain salvation from sin the more hopeless it seemed. Nothing in the Law or the synagogue, Pharisaism or his life in the Sanhedrin answered this longing. He might plunge into a frenzy of persecutions yet that same hopelessness and helplessness gripped him and righteousness seemed impossible to attain.

This alone did not cause Paul's break with Orthodox Judaism. The influence of Stephen's death and the life and death of many other Christians made Paul realize that the followers of Jesus had something which he did not have. The transition was gradual from his Pharisaical position to his Christian one but the climax of it all came to him suddenly and so we have Paul in this great experience at the parting of the ways with Orthodox Judaism and henceforth becoming not only a Jew of the Tribe of Benjamin, a native of Tarsus in Cilicia, a Roman born citizen, but also a Christian, a follower of Christ, one who had the message of salvation and life.

As years passed Paul's training in Tarsus, his comprehension of Christianity and his definite call from God did not permit him to accept quietly the blessings of Christianity. Paul then became a citizen of

the world and becoming such he took the message of Jesus to Jews and Gentiles alike. It was this which brought him into trouble with Judaistic Christianity and caused him finally to separate himself from it. The message of salvation which he preached which was not one by means of works but of faith led to the complete break.

In the closing chapter there is set forth this problem which arose in Paul's mind, from which developed his enforced break from Judaism and Judaistic Christianity. This with related problems is in the Letters of Paul which were written during the latter part of his life. The purpose of the thesis is to prove the fact of his break with Judaism and Judaistic Christianity and the general basis on which the break was made.

Paul made Christianity a world religion. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:28,28)

He also helped men to see that the Christian life is not an external obedience to law but an "out-living of the inliving Christ."

Christianity owes much to this man who at the close of his life was able to say truthfully, "I have

fought the good fight, I have run my course; I have kept the faith."

Jew, Greek, Roman, and Christian, all blended together into one glorious and victorious life.

"I am a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin.
A native of Tarsus in Cilicia
A citizen of no mean city.
I am a Roman born.

I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless
I live, yet not I but Christ liveth
in me."

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